



# Aston Rowant C+E Primary School

## Complaints Policy and Procedures

### Mission Statement

**Vision:** To be a community of courageous life-long learners, who are rooted in God, live out our Christian values and enjoy life in all its fullness. (Col 2:1-7)

**Mission:** Growing together, rooted in God and inspiring one another through our values and our broad enriched curriculum.

**Strapline:** Growing together, rooted in God, having fullness of life (Col 2:1-7)

**Date of Policy: October 2025**

**Date of Policy review: October 2026**

Head Teacher: Mrs H. France

Date: October 2025

Chair of Governors: Mr T. Sowerby

Date: October 2025

### 1. PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY

Aston Rowant CofE Primary School welcomes feedback from pupils, parents, staff and the wider community. We are committed to:

- dealing with complaints fairly, promptly and transparently;
- ensuring concerns are resolved at the earliest opportunity;
- using complaints to strengthen practice, safety and culture.

The policy distinguishes between:

- **Concerns** – informal expressions of worry;
- **Complaints** – formal expressions of dissatisfaction requiring investigation.

### 2. RAISING CONCERNS

Concerns may be raised:

- in person;
- in writing;
- by telephone;
- by a third party with consent.

Concerns should be raised with the class teacher or office staff. If preferred, the Complaints Coordinator will identify an alternative staff member.

We will listen carefully, record concerns as needed, and respond quickly.

There is **no requirement** to raise a concern informally before making a formal complaint.

### 3. SCOPE OF THIS POLICY

This policy applies to complaints about any aspect of school provision **except** matters legally covered by statutory procedures (Appendix 1).

The policy applies to:

- parents and carers;
- pupils;
- members of the public;
- external stakeholders.

**GRATITUDE RESILIENCE OUTREACH WONDER TRUTH HARMONY**

*'Let your roots grow down into him, and let your lives be built on him.'* Colossians 2:7

#### **4. ACCESSIBILITY AND REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS (DFE REQUIREMENT)**

The school provides reasonable adjustments to ensure all complainants can access the procedure. This may include:

- translation;
- alternative formats;
- accessible meeting locations;
- written support.

#### **5. MAKING A COMPLAINT (STAGE 1)**

Complaints may be submitted:

- to the Headteacher;
- to the Chair of Governors (if the complaint concerns the Headteacher);
- to the Clerk (if concerning the Chair or full governing body).

Written complaints ensure clarity but are not mandatory. The school will provide a written summary of any verbal complaint.

Complaints must be submitted within **three months** of the event unless exceptional circumstances apply.

#### **Stage 1 Procedure**

Within **5 school days**, the school will acknowledge the complaint in writing.

Within **10 school days**, the investigation will begin.

Within **15 school days**, a written response will be provided unless a revised timeline is necessary.

The response will include:

- explanation of findings;
- steps taken;
- actions for resolution;
- next steps for escalation.

#### **6. ESCALATION TO STAGE 2 (COMPLAINTS PANEL)**

If dissatisfied, complainants may request Stage 2 consideration within 10 school days of the Stage 1 response.

#### **Panel Structure**

The Panel includes:

- three impartial governors;
- an independent Clerk.

If insufficient impartial governors are available, governors from another school may be appointed.

#### **Panel Meeting Timelines**

- Held within 20 school days of Stage 2 request;
- Written evidence submitted 5 days prior;
- Panel decision sent within 5 school days after the meeting.

## Panel Responsibilities

The Panel may:

- uphold;
- partially uphold;
- dismiss the complaint.

They may recommend policy changes, training or procedural improvements.

## 7. Linked Safeguarding Requirements

Any complaint involving **safeguarding, welfare or safety** is immediately referred to the DSL. Examples include:

- staff conduct relating to children;
- allegations of abuse;
- concerns about unsafe practice.

In such cases, relevant statutory procedures take precedence over this policy.

For safeguarding complaints:

- the DSL logs concerns on **MyConcern**;
- referrals to LADO/MASH are made as required;
- the complaint process may pause pending external investigation.

## 8. Complaint Resolution

The school may offer:

- explanation;
- changes to procedures;
- staff training;
- apologies where appropriate.

We use learning from complaints to strengthen practice, equalities compliance and safeguarding systems.

## 9. SERIAL OR UNREASONABLE COMPLAINTS

To protect staff from unacceptable behaviour, the school may:

- restrict communication routes;
- limit points of contact;
- initiate behaviour contracts.

Violence or threats may result in police involvement.

## 10. MONITORING & OVERSIGHT

### Leadership Oversight

SLT monitors:

- number and type of complaints;
- safeguarding themes;
- timeliness and effectiveness of responses.

## **Governance Oversight**

The Governing Body:

- receives anonymised termly complaints data;
- ensures procedures operate fairly;
- evaluates policy impact;
- ensures safeguarding concerns receive appropriate escalation.

## **Annual Reporting**

A summary of complaints is included in the annual governance safeguarding and leadership review.

### **11. NEXT STEPS**

If complainants believe the procedure has not been followed, they may contact the Department for Education.

### **12. SEND-RELATED COMPLAINTS**

SEND concerns are addressed initially through the SENCO. If unresolved, complainants may use this policy. Statutory elements remain the responsibility of the Local Authority.

If parents or carers have concerns about the SEND provision their child is receiving, we encourage them to speak initially with the class teacher or the SENCO so that issues can be resolved promptly and collaboratively. Many concerns can be addressed informally at this stage.

However, if a parent remains dissatisfied, they may raise a formal complaint following the steps outlined in our Complaints Policy, in accordance with Section 29 of the Education Act 2002 and DfE best practice guidance. The school is required to make clear, accessible arrangements for handling complaints related specifically to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), and these arrangements form part of both our Complaints Policy and our SEND Information Report.

The formal complaints procedure ensures that:

- SEND complaints are handled fairly, transparently and without delay;
- parents have the opportunity to complete the procedure in full if concerns are not resolved informally;
- complainants are informed of next steps, including how to escalate concerns beyond the school if they remain unsatisfied.

Where complaints relate to statutory SEND processes (such as EHCP assessments), parents may also seek advice from Oxfordshire's SENDIASS service or refer concerns to the Local Authority as appropriate. These routes sit alongside, but do not replace, the school's own complaints procedure.

## Appendix I

Matters excluded from the scope of this policy.

Exceptions	Who to contact
Admissions to school Statutory assessments of special educational needs	Concerns about admissions, statutory assessments of special educational needs or school reorganisation proposals should be raised with Oxfordshire County Council
Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation	Complaints about child protection matters are handled under the school's child protection and safeguarding policy and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance. If you have serious concerns, you may contact the local authority designated officer (LADO) who has local responsibility for safeguarding or the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). Jo Lloyd (LADO) 01865 816387 or 07584 581180 MASH 01865 987983
	Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found at <a href="http://www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions">www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions</a> . *complaints about the application of the behaviour policy can be made through the school's complaints procedure. Please click for the <a href="#">link to school behaviour policy</a> .
Whistleblowing	We have an internal whistleblowing procedure for all our employees, including temporary staff and contractors.  The Secretary of State for education is the prescribed person for matters relating to education for whistle-blowers in education who do not want to raise matters direct with their employer. Referrals can be made at <a href="http://www.education.gov.uk/contactus">www.education.gov.uk/contactus</a> .  Volunteer staff who have concerns about the school should complain through the school's complaints procedure. You may also be able to complain direct to the local authority or the DfE (see link above), depending on the substance of your complaint.
Staff grievances	Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the school's internal grievance procedures.
Staff conduct	Complaints about staff will be dealt with under the school's internal disciplinary procedures, if appropriate. Complainants will not be informed of any disciplinary action taken against a staff member as a result of a complaint. However, the complainant will be notified that the matter is being addressed.
Complaints about services provided by other providers using school premises/facilities	Providers should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about service. Please contact them direct.
National curriculum content	Please contact the DfE at <a href="http://www.education.gov.uk/contactus">www.education.gov.uk/contactus</a>

## Appendix 2: Template complaint form

Please fill in the below online form or print and return it handwritten to the School office marked for the attention of the School's complaint coordinator.

### Complaint form

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Your name required

  

Pupil's name (if relevant):

  

Your relationship to the pupil (if relevant):

Address

  
  

Daytime telephone number

Evening telephone number

Email required

Please give details of your complaint, including whether you have spoken to anybody at the school about it

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.